

Red Flag Fire Alert

from the SC Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Red Flag Fire Alert issued for Georgetown, Horry counties Monday, March 15, effective 7 a.m.

SCFC urges vigilance when burning, making notification, taking proper precautions

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is issuing a Red Flag Fire Alert for Horry and Georgetown counties, effective at 7 a.m. Monday.

The alert is being issued to discourage people from burning outdoors when weather conditions present an elevated risk of wildfire. Monday's weather forecast for those two counties include stronger-than-normal wind gusts and low relative humidity, creating the potential for outdoor fires to escape easily and spread rapidly. The alert is likely to be lifted after Monday when relative humidity and chances of rain both increase Monday night and Tuesday.

Did you know...?

An astounding 98 percent of all wildland fires are caused by human activities, and escaped debris burns are responsible for nearly 50 percent of them. South Carolina Forestry Commission firefighters respond to an average of 2,500 wildland fires every year, burning about 18,000 acres annually.

"The weather conditions will be favorable for wildfire ignitions in those areas," said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. "We want people who may be finishing up yardwork from the weekend to be aware of the elevated potential for fire danger."

The purpose of the alert is twofold: in addition to discouraging people from doing any outdoor burning, it also helps to reduce the strain on local fire departments and other first responders who need to remain available for other emergencies. The alert will remain in effect until lifted by the Commission, whose fire response teams will continuously monitor the situation.

A Red Flag Fire Alert does not prohibit outdoor burning, provided that all other state and local regulations are followed, but the Forestry Commission strongly encourages citizens to voluntarily postpone any such burning until the alert is lifted. However, a Red Flag Fire Alert does trigger certain county or local ordinances that restrict outdoor fires, so residents should contact their local fire departments to check whether such restrictions apply in their areas.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 13.6 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.